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PROGRAM All Things Considered STATION WETA Radio
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SUBJECT Problems in Central America

SUSAN STAMBERG: CIA Director William Casey said Sunday that if the United States does not use the military to prevent communist victories in Central America, the U.S. will be flooded with refugees from that region.

Commentator George McGovern says Mr. Casey is prescribing the wrong medicine for the wrong problem.

GEORGE MCGOVERN: The problem in Central America is a combination of economic misery and political misrule. This is the source of revolution and the appeal of communism in Central America. The American response should not be to mine the harbors of Nicaragua or to arm the death squads of El Salvador. If we follow that course, we only feed the fires of revolution and invite a growing communist influence. At the same time, we weaken the image of the United States as a nation born in the fires of revolution, which has stood for justice and opportunity for all.

If we are to be faced with growing migration pressures from Central America, as Mr. Casey predicts, it is not so much because of the designs of Moscow and Havana. Rather, it stems from the poverty of Central America. It is this poverty that we should be combatting, not the people of Central America who are revolting against conditions far worse than those that produced our own American Revolution in 1776.

Central America needs the surplus food, the medical assistance, and the diplomatic cooperation of the United States. It does not need our troops, our military advisers, or the mining of its harbors.

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If the Reagan Administration wants to reduce the future flow of refugees from Central America, it can best do that not by military intervention, but by helping to build a better life for our neighbors to the south.